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RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0102  
INFO RUEHBK/AMEMBASSY BANGKOK 6764  
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 0561

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 000756

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DEPT FOR EAP/MLS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/11/2011  
TAGS: [PREF](#) [PHUM](#) [LA](#) [UNICEF](#)  
SUBJECT: FOLLOW UP ON HMONG MINORS ISSUE - EMBASSY  
VIENTIANE'S RESPONSE

REF: USUN NEW Y 1437

Classified By: Charge' S.L. Rolston. Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) Post highly appreciates the efforts of the Department and USUN to engage UNICEF and UNDPa on behalf of the captive Hmong children in Laos. UNICEF's assertion that their Vientiane RESREP has left for East Timor is not correct, as she visited us as recently as last Friday and told us she would be here for the rest of August, at least. Post notes that UNICEF's characterization of the GoL's attitude as a "brick wall" is accurate only relative to the very soft, indeed pabulum-textured effort thrown at it by UNICEF thus far. We strongly urge UNICEF to take up the cudgel in this small but tragic matter, which so clearly falls within their mandate, and again suggest that there could be no better way to do this than sending a high-level visitor to Laos ASAP - a visit ideally prefaced by a follow-up letter from the Secretary General.

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12. (C) With regard to UNICEF's hope for a period of "quiet diplomacy", Post would point out that we have been engaging in quiet diplomacy for nine months to no avail, as quiet diplomacy is exactly the foggy field in which the GoL wants this issue to remain until it can eventually be forgotten. The decision to stiff-arm the international community, including the Secretary General of the UN, was taken at the highest levels of the GoL, so there will be no gradual down-shift to more reasonable working levels in the future. In the meantime, the children remain incarcerated in miserable conditions.

13. (C) Regarding the response from UNDPa, Post entirely agrees that "continued engagement" is crucial. That is exactly what we are advocating by asking the UN to do its job. The recent follow-up demarches by the UN Country team and other interested embassies were to the good, but constituted more "quiet diplomacy" and cannot be left as the final word.  
ROLSTON